



**United States Department of Justice
United States Attorney's Office
District of Minnesota**

**Frank J. Magill,
Acting United States Attorney**

David Anderson, Public Affairs Specialist
(612) 664-5684; cell: (612) 730-2251

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, March 5, 2008

St. Paul man pleads guilty to arranging fraudulent marriages

A 23-year-old St. Paul man pleaded guilty yesterday in federal court as the second defendant involved in a conspiracy to arrange fraudulent marriages between United States citizens and Chinese nationals.

Houa Vang pleaded before U.S. District Court Judge Paul Magnuson in St. Paul to one count of conspiracy to profit financially from arranging, facilitating and participating in fraudulent marriages. Last month, Le Guo Wu, 31, Philadelphia, Penn., pleaded guilty to the same charge.

"Our national security and public safety depend on an immigration system with integrity," said Claude Arnold, special agent in charge of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Office of Investigations in Bloomington. "ICE is committed to identifying and dismantling marriage fraud rings that circumvent our immigration laws. Those involved in these crimes will experience the full weight of the law."

According to the plea agreement, Vang assisted Wu in a coordinated effort to arrange marriages between Chinese and U.S. citizens for the purpose of evading U.S. immigration laws. Vang conspired to commit marriage fraud for several purposes including profiting financially from the arranged marriages; facilitating the fraudulent entry of Chinese aliens into the U.S.; and facilitating the fraudulent acquisition by Chinese aliens of lawful permanent residency to permit continued presence of Chinese aliens in the U.S.

Vang recruited U.S. citizens to participate in the conspiracy beginning no later than 2006 and continuing to October 2007. Vang assisted the citizens in filling out and filing petitions and other relevant documents and visa applications in connection with the fraudulent entry of the aliens into the U.S. He agreed to enter into a fraudulent marriage with a Chinese national in 2006, and made trips to China to facilitate fraudulent documentation of the sham relationship.

Vang was offered \$20,000 for his participation in his fraudulent wife's illegal entry into the U.S., but received less than that amount.

If convicted, Vang faces a potential maximum penalty of five years in prison. All sentences are determined by a federal district court judge, and a sentencing date has not been scheduled.

This case is the result of an investigation by ICE. The case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorneys David M. Genrich and LeeAnn K. Bell.